

NOTES ON THE RED-CROWNED PARRAKEET  
(*CYANORHAMPHUS COOKI*) OF NORFOLK ISLAND.

BY ALFRED J. NORTH, F.L.S., ASSISTANT IN ORNITHOLOGY,  
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.

(Plate xxvi.)

In describing the eggs of the Red-crowned Parrakeet of Norfolk Island at the November Meeting of this Society last year, I made some remarks upon the specific name under which this parakeet was recognised and known by different authors, pointing out that Dr. Finsch and Sir Walter Buller considered it a variety of *Cyanorhamphus novæ-zealandiæ*, and ranked the name *C. rayneri*, of Norfolk Island, under the synonymy of the New Zealand species, while Count Salvadori considered the Norfolk Island form *C. rayneri* the same as *C. cooki*, and quite distinct. I summarised my remarks by stating:—"If *C. rayneri* of Norfolk Island is the same as *C. cooki* of New Zealand, as stated by Count Salvadori, I should not be surprised to find, upon the examination of a large series of skins of the Red-fronted Parrakeet of Norfolk Island, that it is only an occasional and by no means constant variety of *C. novæ-zealandiæ*, not meriting even subspecific distinction." This opinion was based upon my knowledge of the extraordinary variation to be found in the extent of the colour on the head, and the size of *C. novæ-zealandiæ*, having examined over 150 living specimens that were captured in the South Island of New Zealand, and upon the original description and habitat of *C. cooki* given by Gray, who states it is "Like *P. novæ-zealandiæ*, but much larger. *Hab.*—New Zealand."\*

---

\*G. R. Gray, List Psitt. Brit. Mus. p. 13 (1859).

In the July number of "The Ibis," Count Salvadori has referred to the above notes and makes the following remarks:—"Mr. North, who does not seem to have ever seen a *Cyanorhamphus* from Norfolk Island, is mistaken as regards my admitting that the type of *C. cooki* ever came from New Zealand. In fact, as the 'habitat' of this species (*op. cit.* p. 585\*), I have given 'Norfolk Island' only. The locality 'New Zealand' to specimen *a* (the type of *Platycercus cooki*) is included between square brackets, which means that, according to my belief, it is wrong. In fact, the alleged locality is not supported by any reliable authority, the specimen having belonged to the old 'Bullock Collection.' In conclusion I may say that I am quite persuaded that the type of *C. cooki* (like the type of *C. rayneri*) is a specimen from Norfolk Island, which has been wrongly labelled 'New Zealand,' and that *C. cooki* is a perfectly distinct species, quite different from *C. novæ-zealandiæ*. If the Australian and New Zealandian naturalists will take the trouble to bring together specimens of the genus *Cyanorhamphus* from the different islands, they will find that they belong to insular forms perfectly distinct from one another."

As Count Salvadori correctly surmised, I had not at that time seen a specimen of *Cyanorhamphus* from Norfolk Island, and my remarks that the insular form might prove to be a by no means constant variety of *C. novæ-zealandiæ* were principally founded upon Gray's meagre and misleading original description of *C. cooki*, and the *habitat* given by him to the type specimen, and did not refer to Count Salvadori at all beyond the fact that he had examined the types of *C. rayneri* and *C. cooki* and pronounced them to be one and the same species.

From Dr. P. Herbert Metcalfe, the Resident Medical Officer at Norfolk Island, I have recently received in spirits two specimens of the Red-crowned Parrakeet, procured on the island on the 3rd of October, 1893, and which have been since skinned, and are exhibited here this evening. Immediately upon examining the specimens I found them to be quite different and specifically

---

\* Brit. Mus. Cat. Vol. xx. 1892.

distinct from *C. novæ-zealandiæ*, being larger and having a more robust bill; the crimson colour on the forehead and vertex more extended, and the spot on the ear-coverts but slightly indicated by obscure crimson, as pointed out by Gray in his description of *C. rayneri*\* and by Count Salvadori in his description of the type specimen of *C. cooki*,† instead of the streak across the eyes terminating on the ear-coverts in deep crimson as in *C. novæ-zealandiæ*.

In the "Old Collection" of the Australian Museum are two mounted specimens similar to those procured by Dr. Metcalfe, labelled "*Platyercus*, New Zealand," but the localities are not authenticated, and there is no doubt that they were obtained on Norfolk Island.

I have never seen any *Cyanorhamphus* from New Zealand like the four specimens just referred to, and I share with Count Salvadori the belief that the wrong habitat was given by Gray to *C. cooki*, the name under which the Norfolk Island species of *Cyanorhamphus* must now be known. *C. rayneri* will therefore rank as a synonym of *C. cooki*, which is to be regretted, for ornithologists who have only Gray's misleading description of *C. cooki* will never be able to recognise in it the species of *Cyanorhamphus* which inhabits Norfolk Island.

Appended I have given the measurements of *C. cooki* and *C. novæ-zealandiæ*.

Measurements of *Cyanorhamphus cooki*.—

Sex.	Total Length.	Wing.	Tail.	Bill from Nostril.	Width of Upper Mandible.	Width of tip of Lower Mandible.	Tarsus.	Outer Fore Toe.	Claw.
A 1 ♂	12·5	5·6	6·8	0·8	0·53	0·3	0·88	0·86	0·46
A 2 ♀	11·7	5·2	6·2	0·65	0·47	0·23	0·82	0·81	0·42
A 3 ♂	12·1	5·8	6·9	0·83	0·52	0·3	0·84	0·86	0·45
A 4 ♂	11	5·6	6·9	0·87	0·5	0·3	0·84	0·84	0·4

\* G. R. Gray, *Ibis*, 1862, p. 228.

† Brit. Mus. Cat. Vol. xx. 1892, p. 585.

A 1 ad. ♂ sk. (measurements taken in the flesh), Norfolk Island, Oct. 3rd, 1893 (Dr. P. H. Metcalfe).

A 2 ad. ♀ sk. (measurements taken in the flesh), Norfolk Island, Oct. 3rd, 1893 (Dr. P. H. Metcalfe).

A 3 ad. ♂, mounted, "Old Coll.," Australian Museum, labelled "*Platycercus*, New Zealand."

A 4 ad. ♂, mounted, "Old Coll.," Australian Museum, labelled "*Platycercus*, New Zealand."

Measurements of *Cyanorhamphus novæ-zealandiæ* :—

Sex	Total Length of Skin.	Wing.	Tail.	Bill from Nostril.	Width of Upper Mandible.	Width of tip of Lower Mandible.	Tarsus.	Outer Fore Toe.	Claw.
A 1 ♂	9·5	5	5·5	0·62	0·42	0·22	0·75	0·72	0·31
A 2 ♂	10	5	5·5	0·63	0·44	0·23	0·77	0·75	0·38
A 3 ♀	9·4	4·9	5·2	0·54	0·33	0·2	0·71	0·69	0·3
A 4 ♀	9	4·8	5·5	0·55	0·39	0·2	0·73	0·7	0·3

A 1 ad. ♂ sk., Dunedin, South Island, New Zealand, Feb., 1893 (A. Lehmert).

A 2 ad. ♂ sk., Dunedin, South Island, New Zealand, Feb., 1893 (A. Lehmert).

A 3 ad. ♀ sk., Dunedin, South Island, New Zealand, Feb., 1893 (A. Lehmert).

A 4 ad. ♀ sk., Dunedin, South Island, New Zealand, Feb., 1893 (A. Lehmert).

In answer to Count Salvadori's expressed wish that Australian and New Zealandian naturalists should collect specimens of the genus *Cyanorhamphus* from the different islands, I can assure him as regards Lord Howe Island it has been diligently searched at various times by such keen enthusiasts as Mr. George Masters and Mr. J. A. Thorpe, but not a single specimen of *Cyanorhamphus* was ever obtained by them. At the time of the visit of the Australian Museum party, Messrs. Etheridge, Whitelegge, and Thorpe, in September, 1887, and who remained three weeks on the island, they were informed by the inhabitants that this parrakeet had at one time existed in large numbers, but had gradually disappeared

about ten years ago. Since their stay on the island Mr. T. R. Icely, the Visiting Magistrate, has on behalf of the Trustees of the Australian Museum acquired from the islanders many rare specimens, but not a parrakeet amongst them.

For the past ten years or more on Norfolk Island Dr. P. H. Metcalfe has assiduously worked up the avifauna of his island home by collecting the birds, nests, and eggs, many of which, exhibited before this Society, had not been previously recorded from Norfolk Island.

So far as these insular dependencies of New South Wales are concerned, it will be seen that no opportunity has been lost of obtaining specimens or gaining information that would contribute to our knowledge of the avifaunas of Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands.

---

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XXVI.

Fig. 1.—Head of *Cyanorhamphus novæ-zealandiæ*, Sparrm.

Fig. 2.—Head of *Cyanorhamphus cooki*, G. R. Gray.